



**Statement of the Beyond the Runway Coalition**  
**Hearing on “Our Nation’s Crumbling Infrastructure and the Need for Immediate Action”**  
**Before the House Committee on Ways and Means**  
**March 6, 2019**

Chairman Neal and Ranking Member Brady, the 92 members of the *Beyond the Runway Coalition* would like to thank you for holding this important hearing on infrastructure today. Investing in our nation’s infrastructure cannot wait any longer, as the poor condition of America’s infrastructure is having a negative effect on economic prosperity and job creation. It is time to move forward with a robust investment plan to address our country’s growing infrastructure needs.

Our coalition has come together specifically to urge Congress to make a true commitment to America’s infrastructure improvement by investing in our nation’s airports. The industries, businesses, and infrastructure groups represented in our coalition rely heavily on aviation infrastructure to support economic growth. Providing airports the opportunity to make new investments in their facilities in order to meet growing demand would help our industries continue to invest, grow, and create good jobs in our local communities.

America’s airports are a fundamental component of our nation’s transportation infrastructure. In 2017, 1.8 billion passengers and 31.7 million metric tons of cargo traveled through U.S. airports. With a national economic impact of \$1.4 trillion, airports contribute more than seven percent to the U.S. gross domestic product and support over 11.5 million jobs around the country. To meet the capacity demands of the future with safe, efficient, and modern facilities that passengers, businesses, and cargo shippers expect, airports need to make new investments to maintain and modernize our nation’s airport infrastructure. Unfortunately, existing federal law inhibits the ability of airports to self-fund these important terminal, runway, and ground-access projects.

While passenger and cargo traffic through airport facilities continues to grow at a record pace, our outdated aviation infrastructure is not keeping up with demand. As a result, far too many airports around the country are overcrowded and cramped, which hinders commerce and business opportunities for thousands of companies. In fact, America’s airports require well over \$128 billion in infrastructure upgrades over the next five years. Outdated airport infrastructure that fails to meet the growing needs of local businesses and tourists puts in jeopardy the continued economic growth of American cities, states, and regions. From established metropolitan areas to new growth centers to traditionally rural areas, sustained economic growth depends on the expansion of, and investment in, local airports.

As you move forward with infrastructure legislation this year, we ask that you take into account the urgent needs of U.S. airports, and explore meaningful funding options to address the over \$128 billion backlog in critical infrastructure and security projects at America’s airports.